

Tactical Considerations for the Marine Corps Installations National Capitol Region  
Command

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**Tactical Considerations for the Marine Corps Installations**  
**National Capitol Region Command**

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## SCENARIO

The multiple teams of vehicles and foot-mobile forces deploy throughout the city, resources in hand, with clear routes and mission objectives. All has been planned, disseminated, and coordinated. The release and detonation has been timed and is synchronized to the precise minute during rush hour traffic.

In an instant, Washington, D.C. is inundated with explosions, chemical indications, and mass confusion throughout surface and subsurface population centers. Police, fire, and medical emergency forces spread throughout the city in immediate response to the multiple locations but are quickly overwhelmed with thousands of calls for help, massive rubble sites, and vague intelligence reports that the attack was only the first wave. Centers of government, Presidential authority, and support facilities become centrally focused to internal problems and recovery. Contingency plans drawn on paper are activated to include employment of military forces throughout the area. These plans, however, are slow to respond and act in a coherent manner with appropriate focus in the right areas at the right times.

Historically, the Marine Corps' contingency mission for those forces stationed in the National Capitol Region focused on civil disturbance and riot control capabilities. In recent years, this mission has grown to include providing forces for consequence management, disaster response and site security. However, Marine contingency forces located at Marine Barracks, Washington, responsible for augmenting security in the nation's capitol are inadequately prepared to perform contingency missions due to a lack of clear mission goals, focused training objectives, and inadequate gear sets.

#### **ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE**

In order to understand the challenges associated with the previous scenario, the construct of the contingency force and organization must be described. The below diagram depicts the reporting chain of command in the event of deployment in response to a disaster. This construct, along with the forces daily mission (i.e. ceremonial duties) precludes assigned units from actively executing training and readiness drills necessary to properly be prepared for potential missions.

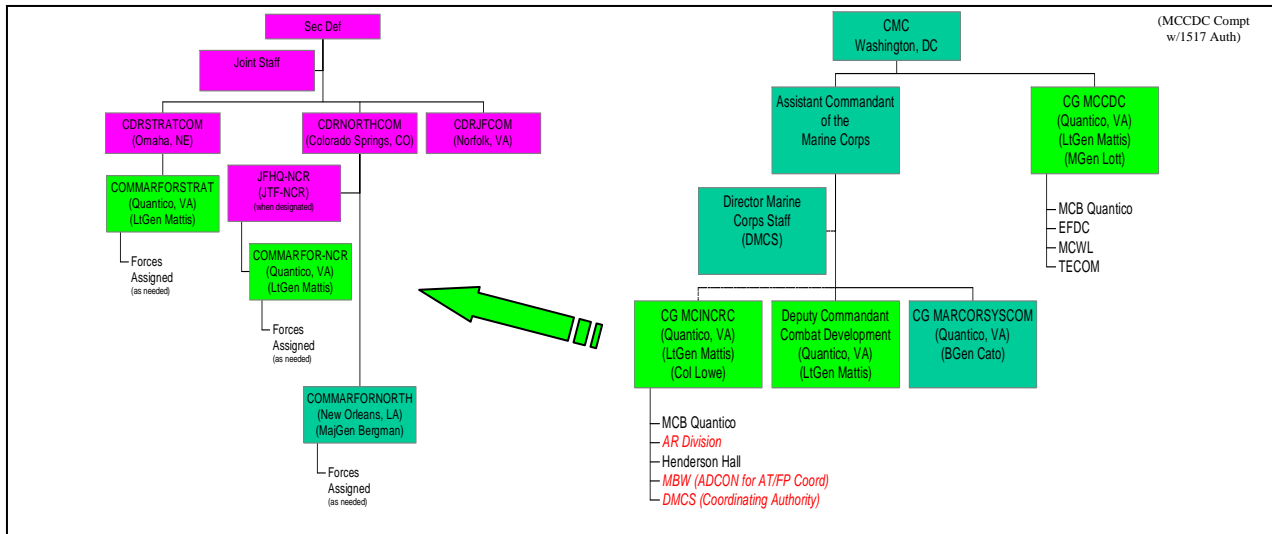


Fig. 1<sup>1</sup>

As detailed in July 2005 in the MARFORNCR/MCINCR  
brief to CJFHQ-NCR, the mission of the MCINCR is to:

"command those Marine Corps installations assigned to MCINCR by instituting a National Capitol Region (NCR) Base Operating Support (BOS) structure in the NCR; to coordinate the Marine Corps installation AT/FP (anti-terrorism/force-protection) efforts in the NCR; to plan and coordinate emergency response within the MCINCR and coordinate military assistance to DoD, federal, state, and local authorities; and to provide general and special staff support to the Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mikolaski, Stephen COL/USMC

The mission of MCINCRRC encompasses a wide array of support and control authorities throughout the nation's capitol. An analysis of these tasks depicts an inability to properly focus on contingency and disaster missions that MCINCRRC is responsible for.<sup>1</sup>

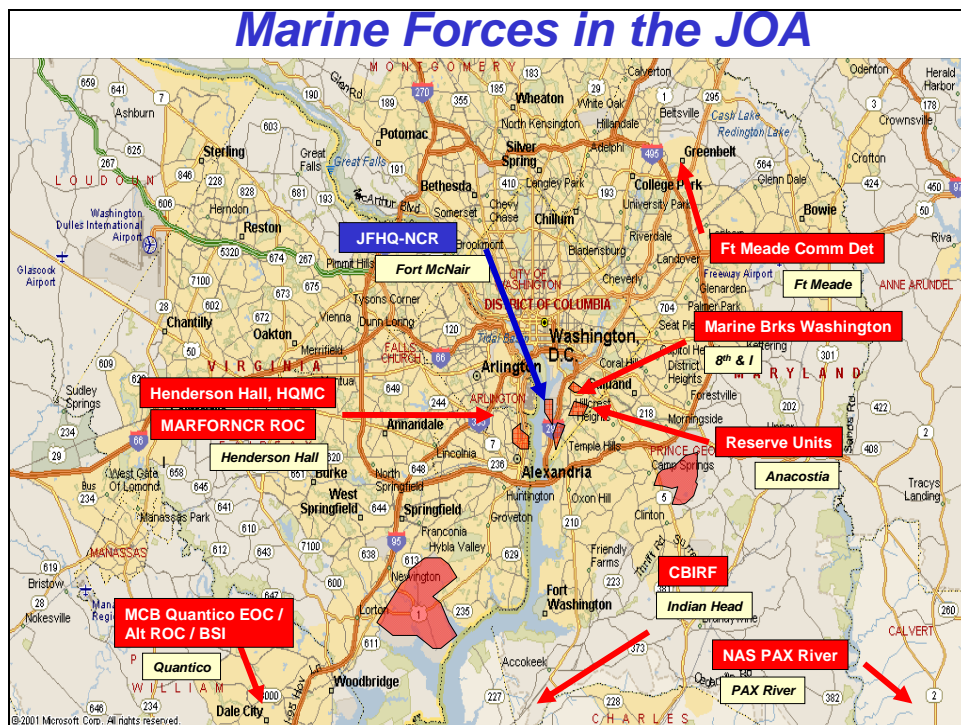


Fig. 2<sup>1</sup>

Identifying significant unit concentrations, as shown in Fig. 2, depicts shortfalls available to MCINCRRC for immediate combat power or crisis response within the NCR capable of responding to security situations. These shortfalls are based on unit organization, capabilities, and corresponding equipment. Currently, the only unit

capable of any security capabilities within the circumference of the Washington D.C. area resides at Marine Barracks, Washington (MBW), and despite their significant manpower strengths, the ability to outfit more than four hundred Marines with weapons and associated gear necessary for mission accomplishment is not feasible. Given these shortfalls, the bearing on Marine Barracks, Washington, to configure applicable training solutions is essential to the success of accomplishing MCINCRG's mission.

#### **MISSION GOALS**

While the command and control structure of MCINCRG constitutes a centric and focused chain of command on the operational level, the dissemination of likely scenarios and missions have not occurred in order for forces on the tactical level to implement and train for specific situations. Specific tasks list numerous requirements associated with MCINCRG's mission, however, only one task is associated with the most important mission - plan and coordinate incident response.<sup>2</sup>

Current force structure aligns a civil disturbance capability with one rifle company located at Marine Barracks, Washington.<sup>2</sup> This mission however, has not been executed since the Washington, D.C. riots of the 1960's. .

<sup>2</sup> CG, MCNCRG AT/FP Staff  
Implementation

Throughout the last decade, local law enforcement in the district, such as the Metropolitan Police Department and the United States Park Police, have significantly increased their civil disturbance capabilities with additions of riot control experts, advances in non-lethal weapons technology and utilization, and dedicated forces for contingency response. With the increased capabilities of law enforcement agencies and likely political climate in Washington, the likelihood of military forces of any kind deploying throughout the nations capitol to quell riots is greatly diminished. Therefore, the mission of contingency forces throughout the NCR must shift to accommodate, respond to, and train for likely threat response. Currently, no set operational plans have been disseminated tasking MBW, the closest unit capable of responding, to prepare, rehearse, train, or exercise these contingencies.<sup>2</sup>

Based on numerous threat analyses by the Department of Defense and think tanks such as the Rand Corporation, likely threats to the nation's capitol include bombings, chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear (CBRN) attacks, and infrastructure contamination.<sup>3</sup> Reaction to these threats would likely cause three primary responses for contingency forces: casualty/rubble recovery, mass decontamination and Presidential security. The capability,

<sup>3</sup> Karasik, Theodore



with respect to gear, training, and mission readiness needs to shift toward consequence management, site security, and crisis response. Yet, despite the current posture and likely threat scenarios, the civil disturbance mission continues to exist.

Command and control relationships relating to MBW for AT/FP planning and execution are not clearly delineated. Currently, MBW maintains an ADCON (Administrative Control) relationship with MCINCRG for all AT/FP activities.<sup>2</sup> Upon deployment or activation for contingency missions however, the relationship between the reporting chain of command and OPCON (Operational Control) relationship is unclear.<sup>3</sup> Previous situations in which the MBW contingency company was placed on alert, such as during the 2004 State of the Union Address and the dedication of the World War II Monument, assigned this unit TACON to the 3<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) for tasking and execution. Additional personnel assigned to other MBW companies available for use remain unplanned for. Despite these command relationships, likely missions and force insertion into a response plan are void of specific direction or utilization.

## **FOCUSED TRAINING**

Since the inception of the current command structure, a realistic and focused exercise implementing Marine contingency forces in the NCR and their likely missions has not occurred. During the State of the Union Address (SOTUA) in 2004, MBW contingency forces were placed in an alert posture with vague direction for response. The design and implementation of realistic exercises to train for applicable missions is vital to the preparedness of these forces. Without these drills, effective execution would be greatly diminished in the beginning phases of a response.

Immediate and effective tactical level response is essential to combating the current threats to the nation's capitol. While command and control of forces throughout an area of operations is principal to success, those forces executing likely missions will ultimately determine the level of success. Several exercises have been executed, such as Vigilant Shield in November 2004, yet these events have been war gamed on the operational and strategic level and most were completely transparent to the public, as well as to those who would be tasked to execute them. Since the MCINCR birth, no exercise or training evolution has occurred to rehearse tactical level force movement or

deployment. This is a grave shortfall in mission planning and preparedness.

Without clear and specific mission goals, MBW is unable to develop training standards beyond baseline 03XX/Infantry individual and collective standards. MCINCRG, along with JTF-NCR, must develop, a mission essential task list (METL) for all contingency forces in the area based on likely threats and potential force employment. This development should be done in concert with the executing units and must focus on contingency plans identified. Without a concise METL, units will continue to flounder through their own analysis based on incomplete and outdated information.

#### **GEAR SETS**

Recent advances due to the Global War on Terror have produced upgraded capabilities in protective armor, weapon systems, and force protection equipment. Despite these advances, forces assigned responsibilities to protect the nation's capitol continue to operate with severely outdated equipment. A preponderance of funds is being spent on high tech command centers and strategic level systems while the bulk of money should focus on the most important asset, the tactical war fighter.

Analyses of the table of equipment (T/E) for Marine Barracks, Washington depict several shortfalls in essential items necessary for execution. Night vision devices, communications capability, and tactical vehicle support constitute the most critical shortfalls in the current T/E. MBW does not possess any night vision capability. This void has serious impact on forces assigned site to security missions, whether inside the capitol or in areas required for Presidential security.<sup>4</sup>

MBW maintains several AN/PRC-119 VHF radio sets, however this capability is greatly reduced due to no cryptological capability. For previous contingency alerts, communication Marines from Quantico were attached for the duration of the mission, however, this does not meet the necessity for immediate response. Primary means of communication during contingency operations, as outlined in previous operations orders, are cell phones.<sup>5</sup>

Considerations of the operational atmosphere suggest that cellular communication throughout a contingency is both unsecured and unrealistic. Dedicated and secure channels for communication must exist for units to operate in this environment. Furthermore, interaction between military forces and local law enforcement agencies (LFA) is essential to effective response. Military handheld devices

<sup>4</sup>CMR, MBW; <sup>5</sup>Lowe, M. J. COL .1

and LFA radios do not currently possess compatible features.

Vehicle support available at MBW in the form of busses and vans constitutes a robust capability to move units throughout Washington, D.C. during permissible conditions. However, tactical vehicle support for those units is non-existent. If Washington, D.C. comes under attack, the ability to move freely throughout the city in order to accomplish assigned tasks is essential. Assuming that portions of the city could be rubble and that major lines of communication will be congested with significant amounts of traffic, the capabilities afforded by HMWWV's or the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) are essential to contingency force mobility.<sup>4</sup>

In the current security posture throughout the United States, the necessity for dedicated, trained, and equipped forces inside the District of Columbia are essential for immediate response and counteraction of likely threats. Despite these threats, such as the 2001 terrorist attacks and others since, planning considerations at operational commands have failed to properly disseminate and equip the tactical level with the appropriate mission guidance, focused training goals, and adequate gear for mission accomplishment. Without these capabilities and direction,

responses to contingencies in the nation's capitol will  
continue to be less than concrete and ultimately  
disjointed.

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